

THE
OBSERVATION
OF THE
Three Great Festivals Asserted
IN THE
Christian Church:
AND THAT
Objection Answered.

From Gal. 4. 10, 11.

AND ALSO

The Right Manner of the Observance
Them made known.

In a SERMON, Preach'd on *Edge-Day*.

By Richard Staddon.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS OF THE

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(3)

Col. iii. 1.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the Right Hand of God.

AND Moses said unto the People, Remember this day in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the House of Bondage; for by Strength of Hand the Lord brought you out from this Place. There shall no leavened Bread be eaten. This day came ye out in the Month Abib: thou shalt therefore keep this Ordinance (that is, of the Passeeover which He then Instituted) in his Season, from Year to Year, *Exod. 13. 3, 4, 10.* Again it is Recorded in the foregoing Chapter, *Exod. 12. 42.* It is a Night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the Land of Egypt; this is that Night of the Lord to be observed of all the Children of Israel in their Generations. From all this put together it may be truly Reason'd and Inferred, That if the Eternal Spirit, who is of the same Mind Yesterday, to day, and for ever, and knows what are the things which are pleasing unto God, and He doth require of us; did (as we see here He did) command the Children of Israel to remember the Day in which they came out of Egypt, the House of Bondage; and it doth particularly set down the Month in the which it was, with an Injunction, *Thou shalt therefore keep this Ordinance in his Season from Year to Year;* having before mention'd that it was a Night to be much observed unto the Lord; yea, it is repeated and enforced again, *That it was to be observed*

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served of all the Children of Israel in their Generations. How much more ought all Christians to remember that Day, in which Jesus Christ their Head and Saviour rose again from the Dead (for hereby He was declared to be the Son of God with Power, according to the Spirit of Holiness by the Resurrection from the Dead, Rom. 1.4.) whereby He accomplished as Great, yea, a much Greater and more Especial Part of our Redemption, as God did work a Deliverance to the *Israelites*, by bringing them out of the Land of *Egypt*. And as upon that Account He is the Lord their God, so upon the alike and much greater Account He is the God of us Christians also, by Redeeming us, by his Son Jesus Christ, from *Spiritual Egypt*, the Bondage of *Satan*, Sin and Death. And as this same Redemption wrought, and accomplished by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead, is so much better than that Deliverance of our Fore-fathers out of *Egypt*, (which was a lesser Type and Figure of this) as it hath by the Benefits and Privileges hereby accrued and devolved unto Mankind, *obtained a much more excellent Name than that*; There is alike and greater Reason that the Time of Jesus Christ his Rising from the Dead, should be remembered together with the Month, for it was about the same Time that they did receive the Passover, and did Yearly Commemorate their Deliverance from out of *Egypt*, that this Ordinance also should be kept in his Season from Year to Year. And as Jesus Christ did arise again, in the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first Day of the Week, Mat. 28.1. and in another Evangelist it is said, *That it was the first Day of the Week early when it was yet dark*. John 20. 1. The Holy Ghost by recording it here in these two Places, in so very a particular manner, that we may guess and know within a quarter of an Hour the exact time when it was, doth hereby signifie, *That that same Night and Day between the end of the Sabbath, and the first Day of the Week, or rather the twilight, is a Night and a Day, or a Twilight, to be much observed unto the Lord for raising his Son Jesus Christ from the Dead.* This is that Night and Day of the Lord, or the Twilight, to be observed of all Christians, who name the Name of Jesus Christ in their Generations. For this Thing of the
Twilight,

Twilight, or Dawning of the Day seems to have been foretold by the Prophet *Zechariah*; *And it shall come to pass in that day that the Light shall not be clear nor dark: But it shall be one Day, which shall be known unto the Lord, not Day nor Night, Zech. 14. 6, 7.* This was exactly fulfill'd. *But it shall come to pass at Evening Time it shall be Light.* It is evident from the Fourth Verse of this same Chapter, that Christ herein was prophesied of. And tho these Words do chiefly seem to have Respect unto Christ's last Coming to Judgment, which is yet to come, yet they were in a less Degree fulfilled in the Time of his Resurrection from the Dead, it being an usual Method with the Scriptures of Truth, to have their fulfilling in a lesser Degree, and then in a Greater and more Universal manner, like as it is with the Fruits of the Earth; some few of these are commonly ripe before the General and Greater Quantity are so. As I could Illustrate this further, and make it more evidently appear from the other and parallel Places of Scripture, which in such manner have been interpreted to have been fulfilled by the Divinely Inspired Apostles. But this would be to go too much aside from my Subject and intended Matter; for whereas it is written, *And his Feet shall stand in that Day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem, on the East, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof, towards the East, and towards the West, Zech. 14. 4.* This was then somewhat fulfill'd, (tho I do withall believe that it will be yet more Litterally and Universally fulfill'd at his future Coming to Judgment) *When Jesus cried with a loud Voice, and yeilded up the Ghost, and behold the Vail of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the Earth did quake, and the Rocks rent, Mat. 27. 50, 51.* For all this comes very near, and is much alike to the Mount of Olives, (where or near to which his Crucifixion was) cleaving in the midst thereof. It is a wonderful thing to consider how the Decrees and Purposes of God were made and ordered, and fixed as to these material Circumstances of Place and Time: Instances whereof are so very many throughout the Scripture, that it is superfluous to give any other than what are pertinent to our present Matter in Hand.

As to the Circumstance of Time, *And it came to pass at the end of the Four Hundred and Thirty Years* (which was the time of their sojourning in Egypt) even the self-same Day (take notice of that) *it came to pass that all the Hosts of the Lord went out from the Land of Egypt, Exod. 12. 41. It is a Night to be much observed unto the Lord.* And so it came to pass that in those very Days, and in the same time of the Year (for all the Nation of the Jews were then gone up to Jerusalem, to be present at this their Yearly Commemoration of their Deliverance out of Egypt, and to observe the Feast of the Passeeover) That Jesus Christ, according to the Flesh, suffer'd, and was put to Death on the Cross, if not on the Mount of Olives, yet, on Mount Calvary, which perhaps was a part thereof, or very near unto it. The Gospel saith, *That the Place was nigh to Jerusalem.* And he arose again. However, all this great Thing was transacted at the self same time of the Year, in which that was, as it doth abundantly and evidently appear from the History and Narration of all the four Evangelists concerning it. And therefore it is a Night and a Day, when in the Prophet Zechariah's Phrase, it was not Night, nor yet Day, it being Twilight, not Dark, nor yet Light, to be much observed unto the Lord; yea, to be observed by all Christians, and by all that call themselves so in their Generations.

Most certain it is, That it was much observed unto the Lord by the Apostles, who had seen Jesus Christ in the Flesh, and to whom He shewed himself alive after his Passion; he being seen of them *Fourty Days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.* Which things are not written and recorded, but by their framing their Practice accordingly, and by their assembling together on the first Day of the Week, in Memory and Acknowledgment that their Lord did on that Day rise from the Dead. Which also is the very Reason of that Change, which hath been made of the Sabbath from the Seventh Day, which the Jews kept Holy in Memory of the Creation; because that God had finished his Work, and rested on the Seventh Day, and sanctified it to our Observation of the same Day of Rest, separated and set apart for the more Solemn and Universal Worship now on the first Day of the

the Week, which is called the Lord's-Day. This is in Remembrance how that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ rose from the Dead on the first day of the Week. And if it hath occasion'd the Change of the Sabbath Day throughout the whole Year, well then may one particular Lord's Day in the Year be observed in an eminent Manner above, and more than the other Lords Days; and so it is done at this Day by the Churches throughout the Christian World. *This is the Day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoyce, and be glad in it, Psal. 118. 28.* We read often in the Gospel, of the Apostles and Primitive Christians assembling together on the first Day of the Week; and John saith in the Revelations, *That he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.* Now it is a Rule and Maxim, laid down by *Augustine*, an Eminent Preacher and Writer in the Church of God, a Learned and Holy Man in his Generation; *That whatever was practised by the Apostles themselves, and by the Generality of Christians for the first Three Hundred Years,* (this being long before, the Corruptions, Errors and Additions of Popery came in, for they came in about the Six Hundredth Year after Christ) *and the same is agreeable to the Canonical Scriptures* (as the Observation of the Feast of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, commonly called Easter is. Which is further manifest from the Controversies of the Eastern and Western Churches about the exact time of its Observance; for both did agree that it was to be kept) this saith *Austine*, *We ought to receive for Divine and Apostolick Institution.* And truly, when we read in the Scripture it self, yea, in the Gospel; *And when the Day of Pentecost* (which we now commonly call *Whitsuntide*) *was fully come, Acts 2. 1. Christ our Passover is now risen, therefore let us now keep the Feast* (the Apostle hereby seems to mean the very Feast of his Resurrection) *not with the Leaven of Malice and Wickedness, but with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth.* Here is enough to justifie, even under the Gospel Dispensation, and in this Gospel-Day the Observation of those three Great Festivals, as is the Nativity and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, like as the Jews, the ancient Worshipers of the Father, did observe their Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Taber-

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cles, Deut. 16. 16. These were their three times of their appearing before the Lord at *Jerusalem*, which God hath Instituted by *Moses*; altho with and amongst them they had brought in their new Moons, and other Days of their own Institution, as also some *Gentile Rites* and Observations; the Continuance whereof amongst those who were converted unto, and had received the Christian Faith, The Apostle *Paul* reproveth, when he saith, *Ye observe Days and Months, and Times, and Years, I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed on you Labour in vain, Gal. 4. 10, 11.* That all this is chiefly, if not only meant of the *Jewish Customs, Ceremonies, and Observances*, appears from the foregoing Verse, wherein he speaks unto them on this wise; *But now after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly Elements, wherein ye desire again to be in Bondage.* Importing, as if it was an Incongruous and Unseemly Thing, that after they had known the High, Spiritual, Free, and Inward Dispensation of the Gospel, they should again Apostatize and fall back to the Law, which was made up of mean, low, carnal, outward and slavish Observations and Customs.

From all this consider'd together, we may learn and be instructed to beware of Extreame, or of running from one wrong Extreame to another, or least, under pretence of avoiding both Extreame, which are bad, We reject also the Truth, which lies in the middle of them both; for as when God had Instituted by *Moses* such and such Feasts to be observed amongst the *Jews*, they did further bring in some Feasts and Observations of their own. Now, in this case, if any Zealots or Godly Reformers, instead of Purging out, laying aside, and abrogating these last, they should go on also to neglect and cast off all the former, they would not have done safely, nor yet well. In like manner it is at this day. There are in the Christian Church three Great and Solemn Festivals aforementioned; which, by the usage from the beginning of Christianity, and by being mention'd therein, and also, being agreeable unto the Gospel, They seem to be of Divine and Apostolical Institution; and as such they ought to be observed unto the Lord; yea, to be observ'd of all Christians in their Generations.

But

But besides, among and between these the *Papists* and others by Humane Imposition and Invention, have brought in a vast Number of Holy-days, in Memory of the Apostles, and of their Saints, as they would call and make them. Now in this Case, if we would have all things done according to the Pattern shewed to us in the Gospel, (see *Heb.* 8. 5.) we should throw off, and surcease from the Observation of many, or most of these latter sort, but therefore in no wise from the former. *I speak as unto wise Men, judge ye what I say.* That is no good Argument why we should not Yearly Commemorate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead, because we would not willingly mind all the Saints Days in the *Romish*, nor yet in the *English Almanack Calender*. According to that Reasoning, which may be gather'd from *Matth.* 23. 23. Seeing that the first seems to be the Mind, and of the Institution of God. This ought to be observed; but the other being the Tradition, Invention, or Imposition of Man, may be left unobserved, and let alone. We should be zealous for, and observe each thing, according as it is the Commandment and Institution of God. But there is no such Obligation as to what proceeds only from the *Law of a Carnal Commandment*, or from the Rudiments and Ordinances of Men.

To shew and put a difference is one Essential Part of the Ministerial Duty, *Ezek.* 22. 26. And thus to put a difference between what is of Divine Institution and Appointment; to shew a Difference between the Law and Commandment of God, and between the Orders and Impositions of Men: As also to point out both Extreames (for both Extreames are bad) and to shew how the Truth lies in the middle way between them both; All this Rightfully and Skilfully done, would prevent abundance of Errors and Mistakes in Matters of Religion.

True indeed, that now under the Gospel Oeconomy and Dispensation, *Holiness unto the Lord*, should be inscribed and intended in all the Actions of those who would frame and order their Conversation according to the same Gospel. And consequently to a Christian

Man or Woman, every day to him or her; not the Sabbath Day only, but every Week Day also should be *Holiness unto the Lord*. And as every Day we draw nearer towards our End; and so we ought to grow better. Even so likewise we should endeavour that we keep each day; to morrow more than this, notwithstanding it be the Week Day, and this is Sabbath, more and more *Holy unto the Lord*; and try also if you can live the next Day yet more Holy, Sober, and Innocent, and so on. Nevertheless, as in the Six Days it is lawful to do worldly Work and Labour, and therein we serve God acceptably also, as on the Lord's Day in the Place of his Worship; which yet is not lawful to do on that. And as we read in the Scriptures of a double Portion, and of a double measure of the Spirit, of Pre-eminence and Excellency, that Christ in all things should have the Pre-eminence; so in like manner, all this hinders not, that tho every Day unto a *Christian Man or Woman* should be *Holy unto the Lord*, yet nevertheless some particular Days, as those *Three Great Festivals* before-mentioned, may be Holy above all the rest, by way of Pre-eminence and Excellency.

Having thus prepared the way, and shew'd the middle way between the too much superstitious Observance of Holy Days on one Hand, and the total Neglect or Contempt of them on the other; *Let no Man therefore judge you in Meat or in Drink, or in Respect of an Holy Day, or of the New Moon, or of the Sabbath Days, which are a Shadow of Things to come; but the Body is of Christ*, Col. 2. 16, 17. The Apostle doth not here speak to surcease the Use of them utterly, in no wise: But as those great Holy days now in Use and Observation among us, have all a Relation and Tendency unto Christ, as his Nativity, his Suffering on the Cross, His Resurrection from the Dead, His Ascension up to the Right Hand of God, and his sending the Holy Ghost and Comforter on his Disciples Apostles and Followers on the Day of *Pentecost*, and so in a less measure on each Day of our Assembling our selves together throughout the Year. Proceed we now to shew the right manner how to observe this Holy-day, in the which our Saviour Jesus Christ rose from the

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the Dead. As to which there cannot be a more fit,
proper, and pertinent Text in all the Bible, than that
we have chosen, *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek
those things which are above.*

Wherein is to be taken notice of, 1. a thing supposed,
If ye then be risen with Christ 2. A Direction given,
Seek those things which are above.

From the Words consider'd all together is intimated
forth that wrong manner of observing Festivals now in
Use in the World; who look upon, and practice it no
other than as a time of Feasting and Idleness. But
herein they forget the Benefits which Christ did for
them at such a time; as also what Duty is expecting
from themselves, as arising from thence.

The Scripture, like the Author thereof, Christ Jesus,
who is the Word of God, doth effectually answer that
true End of his Priesthood, *As to have Compassion upon
the Ignorant, and those who are out of the way.* that is,
to Heaven and Happiness. The Scripture gives them
Notice, and Warning, and Direction, to put them in
the way again. Many of the Commandments and Di-
rections in Scripture are silent Reproofs; for it often
doth in an implied Manner take Notice of what is amiss
or wanting, in order to rightly instruct and make it up
again. And so, where *Paul* by the Spirit speaketh
on this wise, *If then ye be risen with Christ*; In that
manner of Speech of his is contained an hidden In-
nuendo or Meaning, as if many were not risen with
Christ; for He writes unto these as the choice
and best of Christians, and thereby He implies that
even they had made a good Proficiency and Advance-
ment, if even they had gone and proceeded so far,
which can in no wise be said of that mixed Multitude
which is abroad in the World. Again, many do
hear or read concerning the Resurrection of Christ, but
they do not at the very same time mind and give heed
unto what Instruction and Application is to be made
thereof unto themselves; namely, *That they also should
be risen with Christ.*

For altho People now living on the Earth are not
put to Death on the Cross, nor as yet laid in the Grave
as He was, how then can they rise with him? This

Question is somewhat like that of *Nicodemus* in *John* 3. 4. and like that in *1 Cor.* 15. 35, 36. and so it is to be answer'd in like manner. For as *Jesus* answer'd *Nicodemus*, *Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, He cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*; even so it is here, *except a Man be risen with Christ, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, he can have no Benefits of Christ's Resurrection*. Marvel not at this, that the *Apostle Paul* should say, *Ye must be risen again with Christ*; that is, as *Christ* was raised again in the *Body*, so ye must be raised again (even whilst in *Body*) in your *Spirit*. As the same *Apostle Paul* explaineth himself elsewhere touching this matter; as *Christ* rose from the *Dead*, even so we should rise up to newness of *Life*. And so the like Reason is to be learned from his *Crucifixion*. The *Sixth Chapter* of the *Romans* is full and express to this Purpose; *Therefore we are buried with him by Baptism into Death*; that like as *Christ* was raised up from the *Dead* by the *Glory* of the *Father*, even so we also should walk in newness of *Life*. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his *Death*, we shall be also in the likeness of his *Resurrection*. Knowing this, that our old *Man* is crucified with him; that the *Body of Sin* might be destroyed. That henceforth we should not serve *Sin*. For he that is dead is freed from *Sin*, knowing that *Christ* being raised from the *Dead*, dieth no more; *Death* hath no more Dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto *Sin* once. But in that he liveth, he liveth unto *God*. Likewise reckon ye also your selves be dead indeed unto *Sin*, but alive unto *God* through *Jesus Christ* our *Lord*, *Rom.* 6. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. And so to allude unto *1 Cor.* 15. 44. *Christ* was raised again in his *Natural Body*, even in that *Body of Flesh* which He brought from out of the *Womb* of the *Virgin Mary*, and He carried about him more than *Thirty Years*, while the *Lord Jesus* went in and out among us: So we should be raised again with him in our *Spiritual Body*; that is, in those *Spiritual Qualifications*, and *Inward Endowments*, which even now we have, and derive down from *Christ* our *Head*, altho He sits on the *Right Hand* of *God*. There is a *Natural Body*,
and

and there is a *Spiritual Body*, both in this our present State, as well as it will be so in the future Resurrection. And even now we are made up both of this Natural Body, and of this Spiritual Body; all one, and in like manner, as man is now made up of Body and Soul, all one, and in like manner, as there is a living Soul, and a quickening Spirit. The first gives Life here, and the latter is in order to Life hereafter: And this is that first Resurrection which the Scriptures speak of, particularly in that Great and Remarkable Place of the Revelations; *Blessed is that hath his part in the first Resurrection, upon such the second Death hath no Power.*

From what hath been aforesaid, may be perceived, the great Importance and Necessity of rising with Christ; as also it hath been shewed from *Rom. 6.* what this rising, and to be risen with Christ, means; even to *walk in newness of Life.* For we know that when one is dead, and raised again, he hath thereupon a new Life, or another Life given unto him. And so People should turn over a new Leaf, and run Counter to all the Thoughts, Words and Actions of their former natural unregenerate State. There is an Old, Common and Proverbial Saying, *That People should have somewhat new upon them at Easter.* Which tho it be commonly understood of Cloaths and Garments, yet there is some Divine and Serious Truth contained therein, and to be gather'd from it. And that is, what was just now said, now at this time our Thoughts are taken up with the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead, we should also examine and prove our selves, *whither we be risen with him;* and then question further, and look about, or rather from within our selves, *whither we have any thing new on us,* or rather within us.

Do we walk in Newness of Life? And have we put off concerning the former Conversation, the old Man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful Lusts thereof? And have we put on the new Man, which after God is created in Righteousness, and true Holiness? There is a great Fault and Failure abroad in the World amongst the too superstitious Observers of Lent and Holy-days; for many think that such a Season of the Year

Year is for Mortification and Repentance ; (which Mortification by the way is not a Popish Word, but a Gospel Duty ; *Mortifie therefore your Members which are upon Earth*, Col. 3. 5. *for he that is dead is freed from Sin*, Rom. 6. 7. Now Mortification signifies the making dead, that is, unto Sin) whereas this ought to be a Christian's Business all the Year round. And so I have read and heard that the Papists do observe their Carnival before *Lent* ; wherein they give themselves over unto Sin, and to all manner of Excess of Riot, like them of whom *Isaiah* speaketh ; *And behold Joy and Gladness, slaying Oxen, and killing Sheep, and drinking Wine. Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die*, Isa. 22. 13. And so upon *Shrove-Tuesday* they glut and make themselves drunken, because afterwards they must take up, and be very demure, and fast. And so, after that is over again, they return to their former Excess, and Gormandizing. There is too much of the Leaven and Remainder of this kind of Popery amongst too many who call themselves Members of the National Church of *England* ; for the manner of many of them is to practise a Fit of Holiness for a Season. That is, to be in a serious Mood upon the Sabbath or Holy-Day : But then they are of the Worldly, Vain and Ungodly manner of Spirit all the Residue of their time. And this is like the putting on of new Cloaths at such a Season, and upon such an Occasion, and then putting them off again. But all this and such like, is not to walk in Newness of Life, according to the Meaning, and requiring of the Spirit of God. For to walk denotes a constant and continuing Posture, which we abide in as often and as long as we move. It is such a pace as holds on, and continues in going. And so Life again is a constant and continuing thing, which abides whither we sleep or wake, even as long as we breathe : So that to put these two together, it is certainly the Will of the most High God, that we his Creatures and Servants should walk in Newness of Life as constantly and continually as we move, and breathe, and live ; for the new Life is not a thing to be put on and off, to be changed, altered, or laid aside upon every shift or turn ;

no more than we can destroy this natural Life, and raise it up again of our selves, without endangering or hurting it: This cannot be done. And tho many pretend to live or lead a new Life for a Season, as a Day or a Week, or a Month, and then they leave it off again, and then they return to their old ways, like a Dog to his Vomit. But in such the new Life was never truly or thoroughly ingrafted; but it was a Shadow or Representation, and a Name only of the new Life. For the new Life, or the new Creature, is a more fixed and abiding thing than that amounts unto. But that the new Life is not to be laid down again, when it is once truly taken up; or when we are risen with Christ, we are not to fall down again into the former worldly manner of Life. All this is signified by what is written, *Knowing that Christ being raised from the Dead, dieth no more: Death hath no more Dominion over him*, Rom. 6. 9. From which place the Inference is natural, easie, and necessary; that if we also be risen with Christ, we must die to Sin no more. Death in Trespases and Sins shall have no more Dominion over us: And so from henceforth we should *reckon our selves to be always dead indeed unto Sin, but ever alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord*, if we would indeed have this Newness of Life avail unto Life for evermore. That to the Life we live here in the Body, there may succeed Glory hereafter. That the Seeds and Principles of Holiness and Righteousness being planted and rooted in us, even whilst these Souls of ours are in these Bodies; so that at and against the Time when these Souls of ours go out, which will be when this Life, which is as a Vapour, and continueth not, is ended; there may succeed Glory and Immortality, and Eternal Life.

To be thus risen with Christ is the very Means that we may *attain unto the Resurrection of the Dead* in that Good and Happy Sense, spoken of in *Phil. 3. 11*; and also this is that knowing of Christ, and the Power of his Resurrection so significantly expressed in the Verse immediately foregoing. Saith the same Apostle Paul, *Seeing that ye seek a Proof of Christ speaking in you; and so this is the Proof of our being with Christ, if we*
have

have Christ speaking in us, or actuating us, as the Soul doth the Body; or if we know Christ, and the Power of his Resurrection effectually, and mightily raising us up to newness of Life, *knowing that he who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ, will also raise up our Mortal Bodies.* And so the same God who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the Dead, according to his Grace, which worketh in us mightily (provided we consent and yield unto, and walk together with that same Grace) *will raise us up also from the Death of Sin unto the Life of Righteousness* (which word Righteousness, signifies a Conformity to all the Laws and Directions of that great Rule of Righteousness in Scripture) or to the new Life: Which is so called in Opposition and Distinction unto that kind of Life which we did lead in our Natural and Unconverted State.

Every one that understands the least truly in the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, doth also know thus much, That the Principal and only Drift and Design of the whole Scripture, the Book of the Lord, is to promote a Righteous, Holy and Obedient Life in Men and Women. For throughout the same *are Line upon Line, Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept, Precept upon Precept, here a little and there a little,* and all to this same end: It is not only the Result and Conclusion of the whole Matter, but the Sum and Substance of the whole Bible, both Law and Gospel, both Old and New Testament. And if there be any other Commandment, and Words therein; it is all briefly comprehended in this Saying: Namely, *Fear God, and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole Duty of Man.* It is the whole, and all which God requires of Man; and tho God in his written Word, which we commonly call the Bible, doth therein speak of this in divers Places, and sundry Manners, and in different Words, yet they have all a Significancy and Tendency to this. *The Grace of God,* (whereby is meant and intended his written Word and Revelation, answering and agreeing together, as in Water Face answereth to Face) *hath appeared unto all Men, teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, we should live Soberly,*

Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this present World. And so *Moses* and the Prophets, *Christ* and his Apostles, spake by one and the same Spirit of God; and hence it is that they do all so wonderfully agree and meet together, like several Lines in a Center, in these things of Obedience, Godliness, Righteousness, Holiness, and Sobriety. To these particularly the Apostle *Paul* instructs in, and exhorts in all his Epistles, wherein He uses more than a thousand Words, which are all to the same Purpose; and so where He expresses it in one place, by being *risen with Christ*. In another Place, by *knowing of Christ, and the Power of his Resurrection*; in another Place, *A proof of Christ speaking in you*; in another place He mentioneth *A Being made Conformable unto his Death*: Yea, he hath many such kinds of Phrase and Speech; they are all to the same Meaning and Signification, they do all carry in folden in them the same Instruction and Signification; namely, that we should die unto Sin, and rise again to newness of Life. And so, tho many Captious, Ignorant, and Ungodly Hearers, are offended, and do find Fault with Repetitions and Tautologies in Sermons, as to this the Apostle *Paul* speaketh; *To write the same things to me is not grievous, but to you it is safe*. For he knew that it was a kind of making sure Work in his teaching the way of Salvation. For one can never be put in Mind of a good thing too often, especially of what is so absolutely necessary to our Eternal Well-Being, Salvation, and Happiness. To preach the same things over and over doth seem to People according as they are; for indeed it is not Grievous and Irsome to Godly and Christian Minds, to such who seek diligently to go to Heaven, and would not miss of it for all the World. For these know that *Precept must be upon Precept, Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line, Line upon Line, here a little and there a little*, Isa. 28. 10. and all is little enough to bring them over unto God and good Things, we being by Nature so averse towards him, and apt to forget him. But as for the Sinners and Transgressors, to whom this kind of Repetition is so nauseous and wearisome, so it would be but once to mention that which they have no Mind to hear or know.

If I should use more Words than what I have already to explain and make known unto you what it is to be *risen with Christ*, I cannot truly, nor yet would I explain it otherwise than by Rising again to Newness of Life, or that we should live yet more unto God, and not to our selves; for this is the Reasoning of the Apostle aforementioned, *for in that He died, He died unto Sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God*, Rom. 6. 10. And so as He pursues the same and like reasoning elsewhere, *no Man should live unto Himself, but unto God who called him*. And so St. Peter reasons after a like manner; *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the Flesh, Arm your selves likewise with the same Mind. For He that hath suffered in the Flesh, hath ceased from Sin, that He should no longer live the rest of his time in the Flesh, to the Lusts of Men*, (nor yet to our own Lust or Will) *but to the Will of God*, 1 Pet. 4. 12. In the future Resurrection of the Body, and after that, all they who shall be found worthy to obtain a Part and Portion therein, they will live unto God in a much more eminent and constant manner than any (even of his best Saints and Servants) in the Flesh now do, or can do. Yea, God will be to them All in All: So in the first Resurrection, which is in Order and Preparation, and Inseparable Tendency unto that, we should live unto God yet more than others do, or at least it may be contrariwise with each of us, than what is written of the Wicked, *God is not in all his Thoughts*, Psal. 10. 4. which may admit of a Twofold Consideration, that God may be in some of his Thoughts, but not all of them; for every one doth think somewhat or other of God, but not to have him there for the most and greater part; this is a Contempt and rejecting of him; or secondly, amidst all his Thoughts, which He hath about other things, the World, his fellow-Creatures, and such like God is not in all of them; that is, God is not at all, or very seldom in them. And this is yet a much greater Disobedience and Rebellion; for it is to be *without God in the World*, where is not a constant Sense and awful Remembrance of, and Subjection unto him. But indeed, if we live unto God, then God is in all our Thoughts; or for the most and greater part, for then the continual Bent, lifting up, and looking of our Soul, is unto him, that is Invisible. And it is
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the continued Thought and Searching of our Heart, (without Ceasing or Intermiſſion) how we may Obey, Serve and Glorifie him.

It hath been aforeſaid, how that *Paul* by the Spirit lays it down as a thing ſuppoſed, as appears by the Participle, *If ye be riſen with Chriſt*; for He writes unto the *Coloſſians* as unto real Chriſtians. And to ſuch only, to put in Mind of a Thing, and of a Duty, it is enough. For they will inſtantly do it, and ſet upon, and endeavour it. The Apoſtle doth ſuppoſe, and take it for Granted, that they had proceeded ſo far already, by taking the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and the Commemoration of the Redemption of Jeſus Chriſt, and thereupon He gives them Direction farther. But there is a vaſt difference between Real and Nominal Chriſtian; as alſo between Chriſtians formerly, and now adays. VVeread that in antient time; *They that feared the Lord would often ſpeak one to another*; Mal. 3. 16. *And that they would ſpeak of the wonderful Works of God*, Act. 2. 11. This was in common Converſation. And as theſe here in the *Acts* did it on the *Day of Pentecoſt*, ſo they would it more eſpecially at the Time appointed, and upon their Solemn Feaſt Day. *For this was a Statute in Iſrael, and an Ordinance of the God of Jacob*; That when they were to keep the Feaſt of the Paſſeover, and when their Children did ask what thoſe things did mean, they were to tell them, how the Lord in accompliſhing their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, did ſlay the *Egyptians* Firſt-born, and did paſs over the Houſes of the *Iſraelites*. VVhen they did obſerve the Paſſeover, they did conſtantly talk of that their Deliverance, and praiſe God for it: But now adays People do keep the Feaſts of what is commonly called *Chriſtmas*, *Eaſter*, and *Whitſuntide*, with the Leaven of Gluttony, Drunkenneſs, Chambering, and VVantonneſs, in Vanity and Idleneſs, without ſpeaking one VVord in their ordinary Converſation; Beſides, what they hear perhaps out of the Sermons, or from the Scriptures read in the Congregation, out of Cuſtom and Formality.) of the great Mercies of Cod vouchſafed to Mankind in their Redemption, by the Birth and Incarnation of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, ſending Him into the Fleſh, that He might deſtroy the VVorks of the Devil; His Death and Reſurrection, Aſcenſion,

sion, and Descent of the Holy Ghost; these are only the fit Topicks and Subjects of Discourse at those times; but yet they are quite out of Fashion and Use among us, but it was not so in the Primitive Times. If Scholars do not as much mind their Books out of School as in School, they will not make any great Proficiency and Advancement in Learning. And so we pretend to be Disciples, (which word signifies Scholars) and Followers of Jesus Christ. And in Truth, if we do not as much mind, yea, and observe our Duty to God and Christ as much; yea, more out of the Church and Congregation, or Assemblies of People for Worship, as when we are in them, for we are longer out than in, we shall never have that Character and Denomination from God, as *Daniel* had, *Thou art greatly beloved*, Dan. 9. 23. or as it is in the Margent there, *A Man of Desires*, or as *John* had, who is called the *Beloved Disciple*. And so, if we were *beloved of God*; and of Christ, we should have a Sense, Manifestation, and Revelation of that their Love towards us; so that reciprocally and mutually our selves would love God, and Christ also. And it is a certain Rule, according to those two Aphorisms of our Saviour Jesus Christ; *They are of the World, therefore speak they of the World. Out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh*. That where the Love, Heart, and Affection is most, People do usually talk most of the same thing. And hence it is, that People talk so little of God, and of Heavenly things, for want of the Love of God in them; it is because they do not seek the things above; for what one seeks after, He doth usually talk of, and enquire after; and they do not set their Affections on Things above, but on Things on the Earth. Indeed one Reason why those in *Acts* 2. 11. did talk of the wonderful Works of God, because that then they had been lately and newly done; and what is fresh, or a Novelty, this doth most commonly affect the Heart with Thought thereof, and fill the Mouth with Discourse thereof. But tho the Creation of the World hath been Six Thousand Years since, and the Redemption of Mankind by Jesus Christ, God manifested in the Flesh, hath been accomplished well-nigh Seventeen Hundred Years since, yet still we ought to talk of these wonderful Works of God, and to declare these his Doings among

among the People, continually praising Him for the same now at this day, as in the first Year after it was, if we had then lived. Yea, we ought to talk hereof, and praise him yet more and more, as we see the Day approaching: In which we draw nearer in Time, when all these things shall be once more manifested before us. This is the right manner of keeping this Feast, when according to the Allowance given in *Joel 2. 26.* *We shall eat and be satisfied* (observe it is said satisfied, not gluttoned or clogged, for the Righteous eateth to the satisfying of his Soul) *and praise the Name of the Lord our God*, especially for these Great and Particular Mercies which He vouchsafed to Mankind at or about this Season of the Year, remembring still that we are to offer up an Offering of Praise to a Spiritual and an Holy Being, and to rejoyce, and be glad in the Lord our God. Which same Gladness and Rejoycing, if we should go about to raise with the help of strong Drink, as the manner of some is (but God forbid, and turn it from us) this would not be Spiritual Joy, but Sinful Mirth. To such Prophane Christians it may be said, *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish People, and unwise?* By keeping the Feast (it is the Gospel Phrase, so that keeping of Festivals are certainly allow'd under the Gospel Dispensation) with the Leaven of Sin and Wickedness. Is that your Tribute and Return of Praise, to transgress and provoke him yet more? Is that a Seasonable Time of Rioting and Drunkenness, when you should *put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no Provision for the Flesh to fulfill the Lusts thereof*, *Rom. 13. 13.* But now indeed the right manner of keeping the Feast is, To have nothing but Praises unto the Lord in our Heart and Tongue. It is ever seasonable, but at this Return of the Year most especially, to use these VVords of *Peter* in our Mouth, and to have them in constant Remembrance within, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant Mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead, to an Inheritance Incorruptible and Undeiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you*, *1 Pet. 1. 3; 4.*

It being (as we are here told) reserved in Heaven for us, our Duty thereupon is but Natural and Reasonable, that
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we should in this short mean while between, look and seek after it; which would be in the second Place according to the Direction given in our Text, *Seek those things which are above.* We read in *Phil. 3. 10.* of being made conformable unto the Death of Christ. Now there is a wonderful Consequence, Connexion and Agreement between his Death and Resurrection. Concerning his Death we read elsewhere on this wise, *His Life is taken from the Earth, Acts 8. 33. If the Son of Man be lifted off from the Earth, then will He draw all Men unto him. This He spake, signifying by what Death He should die.* Now put all this together, His Life is taken off from the Earth; He is lifted off from the Earth: If we would be indeed made conformable unto his Death, What doth all this teach and instruct us in? Any one may gather and apprehend it; namely, That whilst in Life our Life also should be taken off from the Earth, and that we should be lifted off from the Earth in Soul and Mind, even whilst the Corruptible Body is pressed down, and confined unto the Earth; for it is no impossible Thing, as we by Experience know, to have ones Body in one place, and ones Heart in another. And so a Christian may, yea, he ought to have his Conversation in Heaven, even whilst God hath determin'd the Bounds of his Habitation as yet (it is but for a very little while) on the Face of the Earth. That whilst He moves and walks up and down here, and sees the outside of Heaven above, at a vast Distance and Height, yet in Mind and Soul He may enter within the Vail, and be upon the continued Thoughts, and most diligent Endeavour, how He may make sure of, and secure a Rest and Habitation for her there against the time she shall be dislodged off, and turn'd out from this *Tabernacle of Clay.*

And the Lord said unto Abraham after that Lot was separated from him, lift up now thine Eyes, and look up from place where thou art Northward, and Southward, and Eastward, and Westward; for all the Land which thou seest to thee will I give it, and to thy Seed for ever. Arise, walk thro the Land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee, Gen. 13. 14, 15, 16. And so as Lot was separated from him, if our Fellow-Creatures, and the things of this World were separated from us, and we go upon a Mountain, or like *Isaac, into the Field to meditate.*

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As we lift up our Eyes, and survey the Heavens above in the height, in the length, and in the breadth of them, all things here below appear but as little, and inconsiderable, paltry, and trivial. They are Emphatically and distinctly called the *Heavens of the Lord*, Lam. 3. 66. *When I consider thy Heavens*, Pf. 8. 3. God hath reserved these peculiarly to Himself. Tho He hath now seem'd to give the Earth Promiscuously to the Children of Men, whither they be good or bad; but *His Heavens* He will give only to such who shall be found meet, and whom He shall judge worthy thereof. And so our Saviour Jesus Christ doth discriminate and phrase it on this wise; *But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that World, and the Resurrection from the Dead*, Mat. 22. 30. They will not so far abuse and love the World, as for the sake thereof, either of the men, of the things therein, as to commit Sin, or omit Duty. And if we do neither of those, then we may use the world safely enough. Indeed because we are in the midst thereof, we cannot but think, and see a little of it, do whatever we can. But as long as the Invisible God, and how to please, and approve our selves unto him, that we may get his Favour and Acceptation, and Heaven above, takes up much the greater part of our Thought, Care, and Endeavour; then indeed we are so as is the Will and Requiring of God that we should be; for then we live and act in Faith and by Faith. *Not having received the Promises as yet* (His Great, Glorious and future ones) *but we now see them afar off, and are perswaded of them, and do embrace them, and confess that we are Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth for they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a Country.* And this is to seek those things that are above. It is to have our Life taken off from the Earth, even whilst we are in the midst of Life. *For the Life which we now live in the Flesh, is by Faith in the Son of God, who loved and gave himself for me.* And this is to be lifted off from the Earth, altho we are neither hung on the Cross, not yet do fly in the Air. But if our Hearts and Souls are lifted up from, or above the things of the Earth, then we are lifted up also, and by this way God and Christ doth draw up our Souls unto Himself to Heaven above. *Draw me* (saith the Soul in the *Canticles*) *and I will follow after thee.* Now drawing is from one Place to another; and

and God doth draw up the Souls from Earth, unto Heaven.

I hope that by declaring and delivering Sentences and Propositions of Truth, the foregoing Discourse hath been Use or Useful all along; but however the Use thereof is manifold.

1. To teach us to have a great Indifferency, as to the Things of this World,

2. To think much and continually upon the Place we are going unto.

3. As *Abraham* had God speaking unto him, and also a sight of the Promised Land, when *Lot was separated from him*. So we should for some convenient time separate our selves, even from our Wife and Children, Kinsfolks, and the Men of this World, from our necessary Family Concerns, and our Business in the World, in order to enjoy more close Communion with God, and seek the things above.

4. As we read or hear any of the things of God, we should instantly make Application thereof unto our selves. As when we read or hear of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ; this should apply and bring it home to our selves, as to examine and prove our selves also, *If we be risen with Christ*. For every Article of Faith doth carry a Word of Instruction in it; and in each wonderful Work which God hath done for the Children of Men, is infolded and contained a Duty of us towards him.

5. What hath been aforesaid should teach us to beware of Extreams.

Dum vivant stulti vitia in contraria currunt.

But to go on in the way of God's Commandments, not turning aside from them to the Right Hand, nor to the Left; avoiding too much Superstition on one Hand in the Observance of the meer Ordinances of Men; as also the Neglect and Contempt of the Institutions of God on the other.